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REMARKS

This is a response to the Office action of December 14, 2005.

Claims 1-14 and 16-19 are present in the application. Claims 17 and 18 stand allowed.

Claims 1-13, 16 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. (US 5,241,149). Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection is in error. Regarding claims 1-12 directed to an "oxygen absorber", parent claim 1 defines an oxygen absorber comprising an iron powder, and a first layer coated on a surface of the iron powder, the first layer being formed of iron chloride. The patent to Watanabe et al. neither teaches nor suggests such a product. The Examiner agrees with this by stating in the Office action that, "Watanabe fails to disclose a coated first layer." Creating a layer of iron chloride on a surface of iron powder is completely remote from "laminated layers of micro-proof and packing material ..." disclosed in the patent and alluded to by the Examiner. Accordingly, claim 1 is, without question, clearly novel with respect to Watanabe et al. and, applicant submits, patentably distinct therefrom.

Claims 2-12 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and therefore also define novel subject matter over the cited reference. These dependent claims further distinguish from parent claim 1 and, applicant submits, are patentable therewith.

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Claim 13, along with dependent claims 14, 16 and 19, are directed to a method of manufacturing an oxygen absorber comprising the steps of (1), "preparing iron powder", and (2) "forming a first layer formed of iron chloride on a surface of the iron powder." Here again, as indicated by the Examiner, Watanabe *et al.* "fails to disclose a coated first layer." In view of the novelty of applicant's claimed method, and the lack of teachings or suggestions in the citation that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at applicant's invention, it is submitted that claims 13, 14, 16 and 19 are directed to allowable subject matter.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe *et al.* and further in view of Teumac *et al.* Applicant submits that this rejection is not appropriate because the secondary patent neither teaches nor suggests the shortcomings of the basic reference and both lack the step of forming a layer of iron chloride on the surface of the iron powder. Accordingly, applicant submits that claim 14 is directed to novel, and patentable, subject matter.

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In applicant's amendment of October 13, 2005, considerable discussion was presented regarding the Watanabe et al. patent. Rather than repeating the remarks again, it is deemed that they be incorporated here by reference.

Applicant's counsel respectfully requests the privilege of a personal interview with Examiner Johnson in the event that the rejections are not withdrawn in view of the foregoing comments. It is believed that such an interview would be most helpful in avoiding the need for an appeal in this case.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration is requested and allowance of claims 1-14 and 16-19, along with allowed claims 17 and 18 is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

March 14, 2006


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